



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Fishery Information Sheet

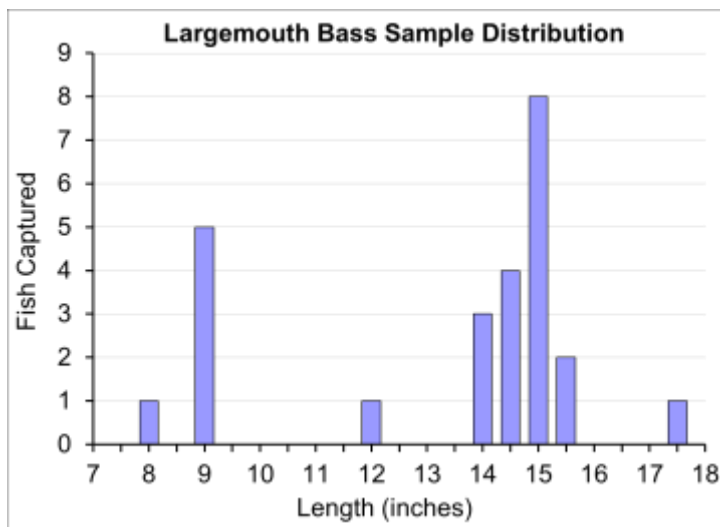
LAKE: Pelican Lake

COUNTY: Sawyer

YEAR: 2017

Pelican Lake is a 32-acre soft water seepage lake landlocked within a small, undeveloped watershed of the Flambeau River State Forest. Maximum and average depths are 16 and 8.8 feet, and 7% of the surface area is less than 3 feet deep. Bottom material is muck adjacent to the bogs that surround half the shoreline, and sandy substrate flanks the upland remainder where submerged wood was abundant. Humic acids leaching from surrounding bogs lower the pH to 6.6. The deepest lakebed is visible from the surface. High water clarity indicates low levels of nutrients and low rates of algal production. Deep light penetration allows rooted aquatic plants to grow anywhere in Pelican Lake, and by early summer lily pads cover much of the surface. WDNR maintains a carry-in boat access on the southwest shore; there is no boat ramp. Low conductivity hindered our electrofishing capture efficiency in late spring 2012, yielding only 4 largemouth bass. So, we returned in late June to try to better characterize bass abundance and size distribution, this time by angling. An avid angler and an occasional angler fished together from a boat, targeting largemouth bass with rubber worms for 7.0 midday angler-hours under sunny skies with light wind at 73°F. Lake level was higher than normal.

Largemouth Bass



In that fishing trip the anglers caught 25 largemouth bass, ranging 8.0 – 17.8" and averaging 13.5" long. Their fast catch rate of 3.6 bass per hour pointed towards moderately high largemouth bass abundance. Angling seemed to select the larger bass in the population—72% of their sample were legal-size fish ≥ 14 ". One bass estimated at 18 - 20" was hooked, but not landed. However, the anglers also saw many younger, 8- to 9-inch bass that did not strike, reinforcing our suspicion that their measured sample was biased. From this imperfect sample we can cautiously infer that growth rate is probably slower than average in this unproductive system; yet some bass live long enough to approach or

attain memorable size ≥ 20 ". Under the low levels of fishing pressure observed and expected at Pelican Lake, the largemouth bass population offers fast fishing action with opportunity to catch large fish—excellent conditions for introducing new anglers to the sport.

Bluegill

The anglers did not target panfish in their survey, but they noted "a lot of small bluegills, and also a decent number of creel-size gills in the 6- to 8- inch range."

For questions or additional information contact:

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